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Ng'anyet: Death Rituals among the Nandi

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Abstract:
Among the traditional Nandi, primary concern for all religious rituals was preservation, prolongation and transmission of life. From the time of conception up to and beyond death, traditional Nandi ritualized each level of life in the rites of passage. Rites were either major or minor but all were meant to increase the life force and connected one with the ancestral world. Anyone who skipped one rite of passage had his/her life force decreased and would be looked down upon as immature and at worse a misfit in the community. This paper limits itself to ng'anyet, a ritual performed several days after burial to facilitate the journey of the deceased to the emetab oii, the land of the living dead. The ritual made the deceased an ancestor and a family saint. It was a traditional canonization ritual for the deceased. Children born thereafter would be named after him/her in gurset ritual and would be the spiritual guardian of the child the rest of his/her life. Children were named after an ancestor of either sex since it was an involuntary ritual. Ancestors were the custodians of the family and community morals. They blessed or punished the living family members depending on their behaviour and character. Above all, ancestors/living dead were intermediaries between the living and Asis, God. Without ng'anyet ritual, there would be no ancestors in the community. Hence, ng'anyet was a fundamental ritual in the religious landscape of the Nandi. Given the cardinal place of the ritual, this paper proposes that the ritual be synthesized with the Christian (Anglican) Church beliefs and practices related to the dead and life after death. As a new evangelization tool, the new approach would see many more Nandi people embrace Anglican Church beliefs and teachings.

Keywords: *Traditional, ritual, Nandi, God, Anglican Church*

1. Introduction

In traditional Nandi, preservation, prolongation and transmission of human life was the major concern of all religious rituals. Human life was protected and prolonged in the world to an old age. Tradition required everyone in the community to preserve and transmit life to the next generations through marriage between opposite sex with an objective of getting children. Earthly life however prolonged did not make life complete among the traditional Nandi. There was belief in life after death. The dead who entered and lived in the emetab oii, the world of the living dead became oiikab kapchii, family ancestors. The oiikap kapchii did not only live in the world of the living dead. More importantly, every family named their new born babies after their oiik, the living dead in a naming ceremony called guurset. The gurenet, ancestral name became the spiritual guardian of the child for the rest of his/her life. Hence, everyone in traditional Nandi was connected with the world of the living dead and the ancestral world through the gurenet name. However, no dead person was elevated to ancestral level and new born children named after them until his/her ng'anyet ritual was performed which made ng'anyet a critical ritual in the life of an individual in the community. Without the ritual, dead persons neither entered the land of the living dead nor were the new born children named after them. Instead, the dead would remain roaming around the family homestead and in their anger caused sickness, dead or barrenness to the family members for being abandoned. Hence, the living family members were careful not to ignore ng'anyet ritual for a deceased member. They had a religious duty to facilitate the journey of their dead kinsmen and women to the land of the living dead by performing nganyet ritual. Everyone knew that after his/her death, he/she would be made an ancestor and children born thereafter were named after them. Evidently, the ritual was a form of traditional canonization of the dead as those who entered the ancestral land became family and community saints. Everyone in the community looked forward to a time in the distant future beyond death when he/she would be canonized through ng'anyet ritual. Therefore, the future nostalgic bliss made the ritual a source of inspiration, confidence and hope in the face of death. The desire to be made an ancestor protected the traditional Nandi from indulging in any immoral behaviour or committing suicide common among the contemporary Nandi.

The ritual was a pivot, the meeting point and hinge for the traditional three stages of cyclic life namely: earthly life, life after death, and spiritual rebirth of the dead in the world. The ritual played a critical role in the religious structure of the traditional Nandi. The traditional Nandi were a monotheistic community with believe in God, Asis the creator of both

the physical and spiritual worlds. At the apex of religious structure was God, Asis, followed by the living dead / ancestors and thirdly, the spiritual beings. Asis was the origin of all life both in the physical and the spiritual worlds. The living dead were direct representatives of Asis in this world and the spiritual beings who lived in trees, rocks, rivers and lakes were agents of the ancestors who influenced the moral behaviour of community. The traditional Nandi world composed of the invisible world consisting of Asis, ancestors/ living dead, spirits and visible world of human beings, animals, trees, rocks and water. The invisible and the visible worlds were interrelated and the living dead connected the two worlds. Whatever happened in one world automatically affected the other world. Human beings, the focus of the two worlds were careful not to offend Asis, the ancestors or the spirits in the invisible world. Similarly, they were careful not to cause any harm to fellow human beings or other creatures in this world. Human being was both a subject without being a master and an object without being a slave to either the visible or the invisible worlds. He/ she was a steward of the creation and answerable indirectly to Asis and directly to the family ancestors. The ancestors punished or blessed the living depending on their moral behaviour. They linked their families in this world with the spiritual world and with Asis.

The major reason for focusing on the ng'anyet ritual in this paper today is that many Christians especially the Anglican Church converts among the Nandi desire it despite the Anglican church forbidding it among its adherents. The converts wish the ritual is retained or synthesized with the Anglican Church beliefs and practices related with the death rituals. The concern of this paper is that the extensive role of ng'anyet ritual in shaping the moral behaviour among the Nandi in the past may be revitalized given the resilience of traditional religion. Consequently, the paper seeks to explore the meaning of rituals, ng'anyet ritual and how it can be contextualized.

2. What is Ritual?

The section examines the meaning of ritual beginning with dictionary definitions and views of different scholars. The Advanced Learners' English Dictionary of Current English, defines a ritual as all the rites or forms connected with a ceremony; way of conducting a religious service. It is any procedure regularly followed. The definition suggests that a ritual has a form that is observed repeatedly by a given group especially religious persons. Etymologically, the word ritual comes from the Latin word ritualis which means the proven way of doing something, an order, proper way, and custom. Ritual was first used in 1570 and in 1600s, it meant how a religious service was performed or the book itself containing the religious services. (https:/ / en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ Ritual-retrieved on 29.11.17)

Aylward Shorter defines a ritual "as an appeal to the spiritual beings, who have the power to influence events, undertaken with the intention that they do so. (Shorter, Aylward. 1974: 126) **Shorter** has three categories of rituals, namely rituals of redress, life-crisis rituals (initiation) and rituals of liminality. (Magesa, Laurenti. 1998: 79) Rituals of redress repair wrongs committed against the living dead and act as preventives and maintain the status quo especially the "bonds of communion between the living and their ancestors and the balance of the universe." Edward H. Winter in reference to the dead rituals among the Amba of Uganda says, "When misfortune befalls an individual it may mean that an in ancestor has become annoyed. Thus, in addition to a feeling of filial piety, all sacrifices are made in order to prevent the ancestors from causing trouble, or if they have already done so, in order that they may cease their attacks." (J. Middleton (ed.) 1967: 3) It was the duty of the living to please the living dead.

Eric O. Ayisi defines a ritual as "a means through which the profane world is brought into contact with the sacred. They serve as institutional intermediaries or sanctifying agents." (Eric O. Ayisi. :90) Ayisi divides rituals into two groups, namely, the simple and complex rituals. He says that simple rituals are less elaborate and are performed by individual like pouring libation. It does not need a functionary. Complex rituals require persons other than the one performing the ritual such as intercessory and funeral rituals performed by the senior head of the family or clan by virtue of their proximity to the spirit world. All rituals, Ayisi says, "are the means by which the sacred and the profane are brought together without doing damage to the social fabric. (Eric O. Ayisi. :90) Ayisi says that there is living relationship and interdependence between the sacred and the profane worlds. Whenever there is a breakdown between the two worlds, the living reinstated the harmony using redress rituals as already seen.

A ritual as "a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and performed according to set sequence." (https:/ / en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ Ritual-retrieved on 29.11.17) Rituals are trademarks of all human beings in the world. Rituals may be rites of passages, sacraments, atonement and purification rites, oaths of allegiance, dedication ceremonies, coronations and presidential inaugurations, marriages and funerals. Activities performed for concrete purposes, such as jury trials, execution of criminals, and hand-shaking and verbal greetings fall under rituals. (https:/ / en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ Ritual-retrieved on 29.11.17)

Emile Durkheim defines a religious ritual as "a set of practices through which the participants relate to the sacred." (William E. Lesa and Evon Z. Vogt. 1979: 220-300) Religious rituals are classified as calendrical, critical or social. Calendrical rituals are regular whereas critical rituals are occasional. Rituals that mark transitions from one stage of life to another are known as social or rites of passage. Social rituals are commonly found in societies where biological and meteorological movements influence change. Social rituals mark and make up progressive change from one state to another.(William E. Lesa and Evon Z. Vogt. 1979: 234) Van Gennep defines social rituals as, "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age."(William E. Lesa and Evon Z. Vogt. 1979: 234) In his study of rituals, Arnold van Gennep

coined the concept of liminality which comes from a Latin word limen meaning threshold. Liminality is the "quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of rituals, when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the ritual is complete."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liminality, retrieved on 29.11.17. Van Gennep established that rituals have three main functions, namely:

- Rite of separation or pre-liminal rite: The rite involves a mock death as initiands are made to break with the previous life practices.
- Rite of transition or liminal rites: The rite follows a strict order of events under the guidance and authority a ritual master. The rite has destructive nature meant to reconstruct and bring about desired changes in the identity of the initiand. It "implies an actual passing through the threshold that marks the boundary between two phases, and the term 'liminality' was introduced in order to characterize this passage."https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liminality, retrieved on 29.11.17.
- Rite of incorporation or postliminal rite. The rite re-incorporates the initiand in the community / society with a new identity, a new name and as a new being.

Gennep's definition agrees with the Nandi rites of passage, which are marks of change from one state of life to another. Though rituals and ceremonies took place concurrently, the two serve different purposes. A "ritual is transformative, ceremony confirmatory." (William E. Lesa and Evon Z. Vogt. 1979: 235) Furthermore, rituals assert the uniqueness and value of individuals as members of the wider community or dual citizenship. (J. S. Mbiti. 1992: 132)Rituals sustain and generate the myth underlying the belief system, while it binds people together socially, psychologically and physically as they participate.' (Yusufu Turaki. 2006: 76) A religious ritual has a reciprocal responsibility and accountability between two parties who may be both living in this world or between the living and the living dead. Rituals strengthened the unity, bonds, maintained relationships, prevented troubles and provided socio-psychological affirmation of the participants. Rituals established codes of behaviour, source of power, mysterium tremendum. (Yusufu Turaki. 2006: 89)

The characteristics of a ritual include the following: special gestures and words, recitation of fixed texts, performance of special music, songs or dances, processions, manipulation of certain objects, use of special dresses, consumption of special food, drink, or drugs, and much more. According to Catherine Bell, a ritual characterized by formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism and performance. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual-retrieved on 29.11.17)

- Formalism: is a fixed religious code and maintains social hierarchy, authority and is rarely challenged. Ritual
- Traditionalism: Rituals appeal to tradition, repeat with accuracy the historical religious practices of the community.
- Invariance: Rituals do not change.
- Rule-governance: Rituals have rules and laws which guide social behaviour.
- Sacrifice: Rituals are a sacrificial way of acknowledging existence of God who demands human response.
- Performance: Participants performed rituals and in so doing their experience and understanding of the world deepened as Barbara Myerhoff says, "not only is seeing believing, doing is believing." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual-retrieved on 29.11.17)

In this paper, a ritual is defined as a religious procedure which appeals to the spiritual beings to influence events and personalities for the good of human life. Sacrifices are offered in search of forgiveness for wrongdoing in order to maintain harmony of the physical and spiritual worlds. In the next section, the paper addresses briefly on several other rituals and finally nga'nyet ritual which is the concern of this paper.

2.1. Ritual among the Nandi

Like all traditional African communities, the Nandi believed that God distanced himself from human beings and the created world due to wrong doing of human beings. Wrong doing, the traditional Nandi believe, originated from evil. Evil is understood as either physical which refers any misfortune that befalls and individual or moral evil which is "any voluntary anti-social behaviour or any infringement of the decrees of God, the deities or the ancestors." (Francis Anekwe Oborji. 2005: 18) Among the Nandi, evil spirits, kong ne ya or evil eye; broken taboos, perjured oathse specially of the living dead; all caused evil. Equally, the living dead and Asis would causeevil to correct and or punish the disobedient in the family and community. In both cases, human life in traditional Nandi was ritualized to protect it from evil spirits and to placate the angry good spirits. Of the Good Spirits, E. Ikenga-Metuh says, "Like the father they punish in order to save...They do not commit morally evil deeds nor do they incite people to commit them. This is because they cannot act against the interest of men and society which by nature they are supposed to foster." (E. Ikenga-Metuh. 1987: 161-162) Comparative Study of African Traditional Religion. Onitsha, Nigeria: Imico Books, 1987. pp 161-162) Consequently, the Nandi believe, like all other parts of traditional Africa, that the original goodness of the world with enough food, shelter and eternal life is reclaimed by avoiding evil and its agents by "developing rituals...to control or cope effectively with evil when it occurs." (Francis Anekwe Oborji. 2005: 19) Common in traditional rituals are propitiatory sacrifice and offerings. In sacrifices, there is shedding of blood but in offerings, there is giving of food, milk, and maiyek, traditional liquor. Sacrifices and offerings are expressions of good fellowship and thanksgiving, pleasing the spirits, atonement and petition.

Human life in Nandi was ritualized right from conception upto and beyond death. Pre-birth rituals included and not limited to the husband desisting from killing any animal like snake, birds of the air or being involved in any form of quarrel or fight. Pregnant women were forbidden to kill or laugh at any animal or physically challenged person. For, automatically, the unborn child would take up the physical features of the animal or the person. A pregnant woman and her husband led a ritualized life marked with restrictions for the good of the unborn child. The second ritual was introduction of the new born child into the world beyond her mother's confine. (Flora Wilson Bridges. 2001:29)Among the traditional Nandi, the introduction ritual was King'etu Asis. The ritual marked the social birth of the child in the society

after the biological birth. During the social birth ritual, the child's hair was shaved to mark the separation of the child and the mother and to symbolize that the new born child belongs to and responsible to the community. The next ritual was naming (calling) of the child, Kursetab lakwet which further integrated the child in the community of both the living and the dead. The naming ritual was the prerogative of the most senior family member who was closest the spiritual world. The child was named after a family ancestor. The next ritual was the initiation ritual, a transition period from childhood to adulthood. Unless the ritual was done, one remained a child irrespective of his/her age and could not represent the community in any way. In any case, the traditional Nandi like all other traditional African communities held that:

> at birth, each human being is double, 'twin', at one and the same time male and female physically and spiritually. The 'twin' principle, postulating a fundamental duality, is realized in the cosmos by the 'sky-earth' opposition and it is reflected in the person by the separation of the sexes-which is necessary for the multiplication of the species. The body of the child is ambivalent: the boy is female by the possession of the prepuce, and the girl is male by having a clitoris…the circumcision and excisions which remove the prepuce and the clitoris confirm the boy and the girl respectively in their proper sexes by getting rid of the contrary principle. These operations, therefore, bring about a profound change at the level of the person and establish in a decisive manner a natural difference between the child and the adult. (Pierre Erny. 1981: 21)

Besides affirming the sex of the person as either man or woman, initiation integrated the initiate with the land, the family and the community ancestors. The ritual was one of the irreducible, minimum traditional prerequisites for ancestor ship.

The next ritual was marriage. According the John Mbiti, marriage is 'the "meeting point" for the three layers of human life; "the departed, the living and those to be born." He says:

> The departed come into the picture because they are the roots on whom the living stand. The living is the link between death and life. Those to be born are the buds in the loins of the living, and marriage makes it possible for them to germinate and sprout. If one deliberately refuses to get married it means, therefore, that one is cutting off the vital link between death and life, and destroying the buds which otherwise would sprout and grow on the human tree of life. (John S. Mbiti 1975: 98)

Marriage negated the element of physical death in that children were named after the dead family members and relived again in the world through children. Consequently, a marriage which had children minimized and neutralized the physical pain of losing family members through death. Without marriage, Mbiti argues, life world be terminated. Among the Nandi, a marriage which did not bring forth children had three options. One option was to dissolve the union, another option was for the man to get another wife and the third option was the woman to woman marriage. In the last option, the initial parties remained as husband and wife with added responsibilities as each one another family. The new marriages would have children and thus neutralized the negative effects of death.

Other rituals included the following: Rituals of reconciliation between two warring individuals or communities, death rituals applied to cases where a community member killed another member. A murderer was restored through a cleansing ritual. Among the Nandi, the clan of a murderer compensated the family of the deceased with twelve cows. It was mandatory for each clan member to participate in the compensation cows, basetab tuga. A curse, ng'oki of a murdered victim befell anyone who did not honour the traditional basetab tuga practice. Hence, clan members were careful not to bring suffering his/her family or clan either by causing harm to anybody or failing to pay compensation cows. The ritual requirements were expensive to the clan, family and individuals. The next section explores ng'anyet ritual and its relevance among the Nandi.

2.2. Ng'anyet Ritual

Ng'anyet ritual is a traditional Nandi belief and practice which expresses the survival of human life after death. The term ng'anyet comes from the imperative verb ng'any. Its English equivalent is unveil. Ng'anyet is the process of unveiling. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English, unveiling means removing a veil from; disclosing; revealing; or showing publicly for the first time. Given the religious taste, ng'anyet or unveiling expresses the three-level traditional Nandi cyclic perception of life of birth, death and rebirth. Ng'anyet is unveiling the religious spiritual nature underlying the physical nature of a person. The ritual releases the imperishable spiritual nature of the dead from the limitation of the perishable mortal body in the grave. Whereas the mortal physical nature expired in the grave, ng'anyet ritual empowered immortal spiritual nature to journey to the land of the living dead and newly children born children are named after them in the respective families. Ng'anyet was a kind double rebirth of a dead person in this world and in the world of the living dead. The new double natures so assumed was no longer limited by space. It appeared at different places and resided in several children of both sexes named after him or her. The shared name of an ancestor among several children in this world neither diminished its life force nor cancelled its presence in the land of the living dead. An ancestor whose ng'anyet ritual was performed lived simultaneously in this world and in the land of the living dead. Ng'anyet ritual was the beginning of a traditional process of resurrection which culminated in one's entry into the land of the living dead and new born children were named after him/her in this world. Due to their religious bigotry and lack of enough information, the western world misconstrued the traditional Nandi (African) belief and practice on ng'anyet resurrection as reincarnation. The latter cannot be equated with the traditional Nandi resurrection. Resurrection as understood among the Nandi means a dead person whose dead has been ritualized in ng'anyet has entered the land of the living dead, emetab oii. The Nandi like all traditional Africa conceives of man one unit with several principles which do not contradict the unity. Of the principles, Emefie Ikenga Metuh says:

> They are, rather principles which link man, 'the real person', with other beings in the ontological order „..There is the 'soul' conceived as a vivifying principle, a life-force which links man in a vital relationship with the other life-forces in the universe. There is the 'destiny soul', conceived of as an 'emanation' or 'spark' of the creator which, together with the creator, assists man to realize his individual destiny. The ancestral spirit also believed to be incarnate in man links him with his family, clan and other human societies and finally there is the human being himself, usually called 'the real person', the unique individual created by God. The shadow is the representation of the real person who is essentially invisible. (Emefie Ikenga-Metuh. 1981:85-86)

From Emefie's thesis, it is apparent that when a new born child is named after a dead person in traditional Africa (Nandi), it was a particular principle of the deceased person which resided in the child. Furthermore, several children would be named after the same living dead member without weakening the presence of particular principle in all children. Seemingly, the living dead assumed new portent nature which made them omnipresent. Consequently, the living dead reincarnated in the living family without leaving the emetab oii. It is probably the reason for Michael Kirwen calling it nominal reincarnation. (Michael C. Kirwen. 2005:51-63) It is similar to naming a Christian convert in baptism after one of the biblical figures like Jeremiah or Marywhich do not affect their spiritual location. This paper contends that there was no reincarnation among the traditional Nandi. It was lack of information and bigotry of the Anglican church made it give disparaging assessment of the traditional Nandi beliefs related to life after death.

2.2.1. Ng'anyet Ritual Procedure

The traditional Nandi had an oral system of ng'anyet ritual. According to Bartholomew Kiptarus arap Simatei, on the day set for ng'anyet ritual, the adult family members took a bath early in the morning in a nearby river. (Bartholomew Kiptarus arap Simatei, 30th July 2010). On returning home, the ritual would begin at the gravesite. This would be around 11o'clock in the morning. According to Jonathan Chepkwony Nyaoke, the gravesite was covered with thorns to protect it from animals or any other intruder. After one year, ng'anyet was performed (Jonathan Chepkwony Nyaoke, interviewed on 28th April 2009) The date for the ritual was dictated upon by the maturity of the new millet planted after passing on of the deceased. It was a religious requirement that beer used in the ritual was prepared from new millet planted after the person passed away. The new millet symbolized new/ another life of the deceased. Most of the informants agreed ng'anyet ritual atoned the family. Bartholomew Kiptarus Simatei said that the intestinal parts of the slaughtered cow would be thrown away shouting, "iyob." Symbolically, this word was shouted to expel death away from the family-Si mata konnyo kii gai ne u no-So that nothing like that (death) would come again." Nyaoke said, "death was not welcomed and the ritual was meant to depute, atone, that is to tis the family so that it (death) may not occur again."[i] This is in agreement with Helmut Thiliecke's argument that man is the only creature who is aware of his death. Ng'anyet is an attempt to wish death away or any other misfortune which may strike the family.

As part of atonement, tiset, Nyaoke was quick to say that an animal was slaughtered during the ritual. The animal slaughtered was a sheep/ cow or a ram/ bull depending on the sex of the deceased and economic ability of the family. The ritual itself as narrated by Nyaoke was as follows: Traditional alcohol, maiyek made from fermented maize or sorghum flour mixed with ground millet,was prepared two days early as the gravesite was cleared.

On the particular day, the ceremonial animal was slaughtered. In the afternoon, in the presence of all family members, "..komi bikab gaatak tugul," at the gravesite, two elderly members of the family, with fresh milk in a guard, sotet and alcohol in the alcohol guard, mwendet, both for libation, che kitatoi, led the procession from right to the left of the grave. The first elder had milk and the second elder with alcohol. The leader, one after the other would springle the milk and alcohol on the grave chanting:

Leader: "Irocho chego-Teech ak irib kaitang'ung si mannyo kiy ne ya." "Take this milk and protect your family from any danger."

The second person with maiyek followed saying, "Irocho maiyek. Bo boiboi. Si keyae tum." "Take this alcohol. It is for joy; to be used in rituals and ceremonies."

An elder with Eiyat (intestinal waste) and korotik, blood, followed saying, "Ei kagiwire yu ak korotichu ko si mata koro meet kainnyo." "These intestinal waste and blood are thrown on to this grave to prevent death from striking this family again."

Group Response: "Teech kaitanng'ung." "Protect your family."

Leader: "Ing'imache ibar chi eng gai, iyam korotichu ak eiyandani." "Whenever you want to kill another family member, eat this intestinal waste and drink this blood."

Response: "Tech kaitang'ung" "Protect your descendants."

Leader: "Oiikab Gai, orib gai." "Our ancestors, may you protect us."

Response: "Oteech kaitang'wong." "Protect and guard your family."

Lazarus Kipkirui Koros adds that the two elderly family members playing the priestly role would pour milk and liquor four times on the head side of the grave imploring the deceased not to overstay in the other world. That he/ she should come home as soon as possible- "Amewe keny, nyo gaa." Confirming Lazarus words, Christopher Maritim Ketter added that the deceased was implored, "come home our elder, grandfather/ mother. Come and drink with us -Nyo gaa boiyonnyo, chepyosennyo, nyo luise." The dead is believed to come back home through the newborn children at gurset (calling) ceremony.

The ritual was immediately followed by the second ritual, kailetab garik in which the property of the deceased was divided among his/ her children as per the traditional standards.

3. The Relevance of Ng'anyet Ritual among the Nandi

As already mentioned, the Nandi are preoccupied with the protection, longevity and security of human life. This section shows that ng'anyet ritual is the point of entry to the Nandi world view. Like in all other traditional African communities, the laws of harmony, spirit, power and kinship inform the Nandi world view (htt:/www.lausane.org/en/documents/all/Nairobi-2000/194-west-african-case study). These laws work benevolently nor malevolently depending on how the living relate with the living dead. Good relationship begins when the living performsng'anyet ritual for the deceased family members. Where the ritual is ignored or the deceased neglected before and/or after death, the deceased had ability to influence the above-mentioned laws to work against the living counterparts as the following case shows. Rev. Esbon Sang of Taboiyat village in Nandi Hills narrated a story of a family who abandoned their old sickly father alone. (Rev. Esbon Kipchoge Sang. Interviewed on 14th June 2017) The old man was left together with his dog which had puppies. The dog fed the puppies and the old man; that is, whatever food the dog brought, the old man shared with the puppies. After some time, Esbon's grandfather was employed by the Siret tea company as a messenger whose main task was to collect estate letters at Songhor's railway station. While he was looking for a house, he came across an old hut and upon entering, he found the sick old man. Sympathetic and in spirit of preserving and protecting life, Esbon's grandfather and his family fed the old man and treated the wounds on his body. But as fate had it, the old man died. Esbon's grandfather reported the death to the family of the deceased but they refused to take up the responsibility to bury their father. On coming back and as an employee of the estate, Esbon's grandfather reported to the estate management. At the time, corpses were not buried but thrown to any nearby bush where hyenas would eat them. The administration advised him to dig a long deep hole about a meter and put the corpse inside and cover it with the red soil which he did obediently. Later on, Esbon's grandfather learnt that that was burial, a new way of disposing the dead. The story of the death of the old man and the strange behaviour of his children became the talk of the village. After several years when Esbon was about fifteen years old and his grandfather was sick in hospital, a group of three people visited Esbon's father very early one morning. The elders were the children of the deceased old man. Back at home, two children had died by drowning and their bodies not found. Seemingly, the spirit of their deceased father had struck them in anger for being neglected. The elders visited in request for permission be shown where he was buried for them to perform ng'anyet ritual. They were shown the site but no member of Esbon's family attended the ritual. After some time, again the elders came back. No sooner did they arrive than they started weeping. Nandi old men weeping! "Who next? Who next? We are finished." They were heard saying as they wept. Once again, the impossible had happened back at home. As one of them was cutting a tree, it suddenly fell down killing two children who were playing nearby. As if that was not enough, one of the elders died on arrival back home. Not knowing what else to do, the remaining elders and relatives requested the family of Rev. Esbon Sang to accept a portion of their land as a ritual sacrifice and an offering to the family for burying their father. For fear of attracting any curses, ng'oki ne bo chios, upon themselves, the family of Espon have not taken up the property. To date, no solution is forth coming yet death continuous to claim more lives in the family.

Choices have consequences in traditional Nandi religion as confirmed in the above incident where the ritual was performed but death continued to claim more lives. How can one explain it? It is more likely that there was something more the concerned family committed against the deceased grandparent which was not disclosed at the ng'anyet ritual day or the ritual was performed just as a formality without any total surrender and repentance of the living family members on behalf of the whole family, dead or alive. Another incident took place near Mosoriot, Chesumei Sub County in Nandi County. Magirin arap Limo of Ndabtabwa near Mosoriot narrated an incident of 1983 in which ng'anyet ritual was not performed on the argument that the ritual was old fashioned thing not fit for Christian converts. The spirit of the deceased person kept visiting and tormenting the widow until she complained to the brothers-in-laws. The brothers performed the ng'anyet ritual and the spirit ceased disturbing the widow. The Another incident took place in 2004 where the ritual was not done. The wife of the deceased complained to Magirin arap Limo of sleepless nights. The complainant reported that her late husband kept appearing to her at night in dreams. At the same time, Magirin said, "Mabiit kiiy age tugul eng kererit-nothing sprouted on the gravesite despite the family and relatives having planted flowers on the burial day. Strangely, in this case, neither flowers nor grass sprouted even after long rains. The red earth at the gravesite remained as constant reminder and guilt conscience for the living family members on their failure to perform the age-old traditional practice on one of their own departed members. Furthermore, the spirit of the deceased inflicted suffering on the widow and the family at large. One day, the brothers of the deceased and the widow performed ng'anyet ritual. Since that day, bad dreams and the spirit of the deceased man ceased visiting the widow. Green grass sprouted. Magirin reported that the widow who, until then was a devout member of the African Inland Church (AIC) ceased attending the church. To this day, the widow has abandoned Christianity altogether on the argument that the religion was both powerless and valueless as did not address her plight.

- The security of life is the main objective of ng'anyet ritual among the Nandi. The ritual releases life force or power to the deceased to access the land of the living dead. It is like a pass word which the dead must possess to enter the ancestral world.
- The ritual is "an appeal to the spiritual beings who have power to influence events, undertaken with the intention that they do so." (Laurenti Magesa. 1998: 79) The ritual repairs any wrong committed against the dead which may cause sufferings and afflictions of the living family members. The ritual is a preventive measure and seeks to keep

the good relationship between the dead and the living family members. It is a traditional sacrament of communion that stabilizes the communion between the visible and invisible worlds and the entire universe.

- The ritual is the meeting point of the past, the present and the future. The ritual released the spirit of a dead family member to be named after a new born child in a second ritual called gurset, naming ritual. Ng'anyet ritual was like the 'first cause' for all other rituals-naming, initiation and marriage rituals. All adults in Nandi passed through all the rituals including ng'anyet so that in principle, the living have a foretaste of the life in the world of the living dead. The rituals increased the life force such that an adult could speak to the living dead and would hear and listen. The more the rituals one went through, the more the life force was and the closer one the land of the living dead became. The children have moral responsibility upon their parents as Kimalat confirmed below:

> Children are a kind of insurance policy for prosperity and stability...Besides, the process of giving an ancestral name to a child enhances family proximity to the spirit world and to God ("Asis") through the living dead. In this context then, the infant is not a new individual but one of the living dead who has returned to relive again amongst his people (A.B.T. Byyaruhanga-Akiiki. 1971:3)

The ritual brought ease, complete peace and satisfaction to families. The burden and anxiety of not knowing the whereabouts of the deceased are eased at ng'anyet ritual. During this time, the deceased was set free to live and participate in the affairs of the family as one of the senior elders. According to Lazarus Kipkirui Koros, the purpose of Ng'anyet ritual was to set free everybody in the family. Before the ritual was observed, everybody in the family was under restriction. The family would not perform any major activity like a marriage or circumcision. Everyone knew that one of their own was absent and he/ she must be welcomed back to so as to participate in the family activities as a senior family member.

In an event of a failure to perform ng'anyet ritual, all informants, young and old agreed that it brought disaster to the particular family. The deceased members of such family would be angry at their living counterparts and would act malevolently against them. It destroyed the family, through continuous sicknesses and death. In some instances, children become moronic, foolish or brainless-abusaan, tengenootin or mong'onge'notin. The community feared such eventualities and everybody did everything possible to avoid it. (Peter Mengich, assistant chief of Kabisaga sub location, Kabisaga location, Kabiyet division, Nandi North District narrated) Other common fears ranged from bad things befalling the family, stillbirths especially of boys would affect the family. Lazarus Koros said, "Begu mising ng'etikab gaata- The boy children of a particular family would continuously die." (Lazarus Kipkirui Koros, 11th July 2010) Anselm Kipngetich Cheruiyot says, "Yaitu kii- Something disastrous would befall the family." Pressed further, Cheruiyot said, "Ng'emangemi iyotet ak malitititu matab goyoto- It affects the childbirths and the procreation in the family was adversely affected. Besides that, there would be prolonged suffering with unknown causes in the family." Lazarus Koros sums up the relevance of the ritual by saying that it is held "asi kotililit gaaak si keguur chitgai kwak- So that there is good health in the family and to enable the deceased to be called back through a newborn child in the naming ritual." Adults knew and believed children would perform ng'anyet ritual for them after death so as to relive life in this world as living dead member in the family. With this in mind, every one ensured he/ she got married and had children. If the first marriage was not forth coming, one entered another one in search for children who would later facilitate his/ her journey to the world of the living dead.

The above cases showed the critical place of ng'anyet ritual in the traditional Nandi especially in the relationship between the living and the dead. More importantly, through the ritual, the living had mystical ability to communicate with the spirits of the dead, a mystical unity between the dead and the living. The example of a widow in Mosoriot mentioned above who realised her ability in the traditional religion which she did not possess in Christian religion (AIC) is a clear indication of how people realized their potentiality in the traditional religion. She realized abundance of life in the traditional religion in general and ng'anyet ritual in particular. She reimagined an eternal reunification with her late husband in the world of the living dead.

From the above findings, ng'anyet occupied special place as the source of security, preservation and transmission of life in traditional Nandi.

When the Anglican Church came to Nandi, it interpreted the traditional worldview especially ng'anyet ritual using western conceptual schemes which conflicted with the traditional Nandi religious world view. The traditional religion was not at par with the world religion. Successive missionaries and the Nandi Anglican converts have unfairly maintained the inferior position of the traditional Nandi religion to date. For Christianity in Nandi and especially the Anglican church to be deeply rooted in the Nandi soil, it needs to be interpreted using the traditional classes of the community. The Christian methods of evangelization which demanded converts to completely break away from traditional beliefs and practices made Christianity a colonial religion. It did not create room for religious freedom for converts. Consequently, Christians Are like foreigners with religious homesickness. Time has come for the Anglican Church in Nandi to address the homesickness by synthesizing traditional beliefs and practices with the Christian teachings. The new product is a person both Christian and traditional religious trademarks. The new convert is both/ and no longer either/ or.

4. Conclusions

Nga'nyet ritual expressed belief in life after death and resurrection among the traditional Nandi. The ritual further demonstrated how the living; by virtue of their ritualized lives had religious responsibility to facilitate the journey of the dead to the emetab oii, paradise. As a further emphasize on life after death, the dead were reborn back into this world through gurset ritual, naming of new born children after the living dead, as their guardian spirits. The spirit connected the child with the world of the living dead. However, no one was named after the dead whose ng'anyet ritual was not performed, making the ritual a precondition for eternal fulfillment of man in the present. Furthermore, the ritual exemplified how the Nandi put premium in the present as it is here and now that shaped the future. It was the emphasis

on the present which made scholars like John Mbiti to unfairly conclude that traditional Africa did not have a distant future. The future was in the children (present) named after the living dead (past). Indeed, the future was experienced in the present through children. Religious beliefs related with judgement and redistribution were dealt with in this life and ng'anyet ritual was like a clean bill of religious health.

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